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Rhayader
Rural District Council



Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer
of Health

For the Year 1961

Members of the Council

Year 1961

Chairman : Alderman E. T. KINSEY MORGAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman : R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

Councillors :

Abbeycwmhir

O. P. DAVIES (Died Feb. 1962)

F. Hamer, (Elected May 1961)

J. E. L. GRIFFITHS, (Resigned
May 1961)

Llanyre

S. E. Lloyd

W. A. PROBERT

Cefnlllys Rural

J. T. L. PRICE

Nantmel

R. E. P. Jones

A. E. OAKLEY

I. THOMAS

Llanbadarnfawr

I. J. LEWIS

R. T. KNILL, C.C.

Llanfihangel Helygen

A. THOMPSON

Rhayader

R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

G. D. MORGAN, C.C.

St. Harmon

D. H. BOUND

Ald. E. T. KINSEY MORGAN, J.P.

Llansantffraed Cwmddeuddwr

Maj. Gen. R. S. LEWIS, C.B., O.B.E.

V. LEWIS

W. SCOTT, J.P., (Elected May 1961)

J. D. WILLIAMS, (Elected May 1961)

A. H. PRICE, (Resigned May 1961)

F. G. WHITE, (Resigned May 1961)

Committees :

Public Health and Housing : All members of the Council

Chairman : O. P. DAVIES

Finance : All members of the Council

Chairman : Maj. Gen. R. S. LEWIS, C.B., O.B.E.

Medical Officer of Health :

JOHN DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch., B.Sc.

(Medical Practitioner and Part-time M.O.H.)

Telephone : Rhayader 31

Public Health Inspector :

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

(Certs.—S.I.E.J.B. and Meat and Foods of R.S.H.)

Council Offices :

Dolgerddon Hall, Rhayader

Telephone : Rhayader 9

BRYNCOED,

RHAYADER,

Radnor.

22nd August, 1962

To the Chairman and Members of the

Rural District Council of Rhayader

Sirs,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report for the year 1961. This is prepared in accordance with the instructions received from the Welsh Board of Health.

Rhayader is a particularly close knit community and a large number of people spend a great deal of their time sponsoring local activities, either for the benefit of the local people or for the visitors. The Parish Councils are especially active in this work.

Worthy of special mention is the welfare work carried out by the two sections of the British Legion, the Rhayader Darby and Joan Club who help the old people and who initiated the local chiropody service, the Old People's Club of Newbridge, the various Women's Institutes, the Y.M.C.A. and the St. John's Ambulance Division.

The need of the district for a residential home for the old people is recognised by the County Council and it is hoped that this requirement will be fulfilled in the near future, together with the Rural Council's plans for group bungalows.

The distribution of employment in this area remains essentially the same as last year. Agriculture is by far the major industry, engaging about 40% of the population.

Tourism is becoming increasingly important, and with this in mind, the Council are planning to have a new caravan site for forty caravans functioning for the 1963 season. This will encourage visitors to remain in the district to enjoy the great natural beauty, the 1,500 acres of lake fishing in the Elan Valley, and the seven miles of fishing on the River Wye controlled by the local Angling Association.

For those who wish to see the mountains at close range the popular Pony Trekking Association provides facilities.

The New Hospital Plan for Wales indicates that the nearest base hospital will be Aberystwyth, some thirty five miles from Rhayader and by a road which at times in winter becomes extremely difficult to travel. To minimise delay in the transference of patients to hospital it is important that the ambulance station at Rhayader should be maintained. At present, volunteer drivers of the St. John's Brigade maintain this service and I wish to pay tribute to the efficient manner in which they do this essential work.

During the past year the slum clearance programme has unfortunately been delayed, pending the housing schemes projected for Rhayader, Pantydwr, Crossgates and Llanyre, and has been confined to the closure of unfit houses as they become empty. Even so twenty passed out of use in this year, leaving 62 from the original total of 137. As 27 of these houses are in Rhayader itself, the new scheme for the town should help to remove these anachronisms of our modern times.

There was no widespread illness in the community and its general health remained good.

I am grateful to all members of the Council and Council staff for their help and co-operation throughout the year, and to the Public Health Inspector for his assistance in the preparation of this report.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DAVIES.

GENERAL STATISTICS

	1960	1961
Area of District	91,240 acres	
Estimated Population (mid 1961)	4,220	4,050
Number of Inhabited Houses:—		
In Parishes		
Abbeycwmhir	68	69
Cefnlllys Rural	24	25
Llanbadarnfawr	150	151
Llanfihangel Helygen	14	14
Llansantffraed Cwmdeuddwr	164	164
Llanyre (Rural Ward)	81	81
Llanyre (Village Ward)	129	129
Nantmel	204	206
Rhayader	338	346
St. Harmon	135	136
Total	1,307	*1,321

* These figures include seven residential caravans

Rateable Value	£89,678	£85,135
Product of a Penny Rate	£305	£348

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Agriculture is the principal industry of the area supporting over 40% of the population. The type of farming is dictated by the high altitude and high rainfall, and the main crop is grass, the chief enterprise being cattle and sheep grazing.

Of recent years the acreage devoted to forestry has increased rapidly, the most spectacular effect of this being the size, and development of forestry roads. This industry, together with subsidiary industries based upon it may well make a substantial contribution to the wealth of the area.

The Birmingham water shed comprises some 45,000 acres and as the bulk of this is in this district, it follows that visitors to the lakes add something to the wealth of the area, especially if those now merely passing through could be induced to stay. The Council's efforts in this direction, with the projected caravan site, is to be commended.

The pattern of the weather of the past few years seems to have been repeated with a dry spring and wetter summer. Rainfall is as below :—

1961

January	...	...	6.01	inches
February	...	...	4.35	„
March	...	...	1.34	„
April	...	...	4.83	„
May	...	...	2.35	„
June	...	...	1.35	„
July	...	...	2.17	„
August	...	...	2.64	„
September	...	...	3.18	„
October	...	...	7.22	„
November	...	...	3.26	„
December	...	...	5.18	„
Total			44.18	„

This was 92% of the long average and compares with :—

128%	-	1960
100%	-	1959
106%	-	1958

Atmospheric pollution is nil

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by a part-time Medical Officer of Health, a Surveyor and Water Engineer and a Public Health Inspector. A Rodent Operative is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Bacteriological analyses of water are undertaken by the Public Health Service, Shrewsbury and chemical analyses by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen. The possible closure of railway services in Mid-Wales may affect these arrangements and it remains to be seen what alterations can be made.

Infant Welfare Clinics are held monthly at Rhayader and Newbridge-on-Wye.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at other hospitals farther afield.

The Nursing Services are administered by the Radnorshire County Council. At present there are four nurses resident in the district, the rest of the area is covered from outside. The service has been augmented by the appointment of a Health Visitor who specialises in the welfare of the old and young.

Ambulance Services are provided by the Local St. John's Voluntary Service. This arrangement works well and avoids the inevitable delays which would arise from a central service in such a sparsely populated area where distance and lack of local knowledge might prove to be insuperable obstacles.

VITAL STATISTICS

With a small population the statistics rates can be vastly influenced by comparatively small differences. Thus although in 1960 the still-birth rate was 53.3 for 4 still-births, the 3 still-births in 1961 show a rate of 41.1. The average rate over the past ten years is 31.95 against a national rate of 18.7.

Another disturbing trend is the continuing fall in the total population which now stands at 4,050 against 4,260 five years ago. This is in spite of a surplus of births over deaths in this time, of 66.

Live Births

Male—legitimate	34,	illegitimate	Nil	...	...	...	34
Female—	„	34,	„	2	...	..	36
							—
							Total 70
Rate per 1,000 population (corrected)	.	...	...	...	...	...	21.95
Rate for England and Wales	17.4

Illegitimate Live Births

Per cent of total live births	2.1%
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Still-births

Male—legitimate	3
Females—	„	Nil
							—
							Total 3
Rate per 1,000 total live and still-births	41.1
Average for ten years	...	...	...	...	...	...	31.95
Rate for England and Wales	...	...	...	...	...	...	18.7

Total Live and Still-Births

Male ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	37
Female ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	36
								<hr/> 73

Infant Deaths (under 1 year)

Legitimate—Female ..	...	...	...	...	...	1
„ —Male ...	...	...	...	...	...	2
Illegitimate ...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil

Infant Mortality Rates

Total infant deaths per 1,000 live births	...	...	42.8
„ „ „ (England and Wales)	...	...	21.4
Legitimate infant deaths per 1,00 legitimate live births	...	...	42.8
Illegitimate infant deaths	...	...	Nil

Neo-Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under 4 weeks per 1,000 live births	...	...	28.63
For England and Wales (1960)	...	...	15.6

Early Neo-Natal Mortality Rate

Deaths under 1 week per 1,000 live births	14.3
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Perinatal Mortality Rate

Still births and deaths under 1 week combined per			
1,000 total live and still-births	54.8
For England and Wales (1960)	32.9

Maternal Mortality	Nil
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Births and Deaths in Previous Years

Year	Births	Deaths	Corrected Rate per 1,000 pop.	
			Births	Deaths
1961	70	54	22.0	11.7
5 years average	63.6	50.8	18.2	11.9
Rate for England and Wales			17.4	12.0

Causes of Death

			Male	Female
Malignant Neoplasm—lung, bronchus	...	...	1	1
—breast	...	...	—	1
—other sites	...	...	3	2
Leukaemia, aleukaemia	..	..	1	—
Vascular lesions of nervous system	...	...	1	4
Coronary disease—angina	...	...	10	2
Other heart disease	...	...	2	6

Other circulatory disease	2	2
Influenza	—	1
Pneumonia	1	—
Bronchitis	—	1
Ulcer of Stomach, duodenum	1	—
Congenital malformations	1	—
Other defined and ill defined diseases	1	8
Motor vehicle accidents	1	1
	25	29
Totals	54	

The incidence of deaths from cancer continue to be lower than the national average, being 14% against 18%. Perhaps our complete absence of atmospheric pollution is a help in this respect.

Infectious Diseases

There were no outbreaks of infectious disease or food poisoning during the year and the figures are as follows :—

Measles 6 Pneumonia 4

In the middle part of the year a matter for great concern was the discovery of two carriers of typhoid in one family. It is very fortunate that the family is very isolated and all steps have been taken to educate them in personal hygiene.

Tuberculosis

No. of cases on Register :	M	F
Pulmonary	7	7
Non Pulmonary	3	2
	10	9
Total	19	

Two new cases of pulmonary and one non-pulmonary were reported during the year. There were no deaths from T.B. and the number on the register is still less than half of those in 1951.

Immunisation

Records of the number of people immunised are not available, but this work is undertaken by the general practitioners and at the infant welfare centre.

National Assistance Act 1948—Section 47

This act gives the Medical Officer of Health power to remove persons in need of care and attention to institutions.

This was not necessary during the past year.

Public Health Inspections etc.

An approximate summary of visits made for various aspects of Public Health is as follows :—

Housing—					
Allocation of Council Houses	...	...	...	...	68
Slum clearance, Survey, etc.	...	...	...	...	102
Improvements—Housing Act.	...	...	...	...	101
—Hill Farming Schemes	...	...	...	...	111
Public Health Act—					
Sewer connections, etc.	...	...	...	...	23
Drainage, disposal plants, etc.	...	...	...	...	31
Sanitary defects—houses	...	...	...	...	57
„ „ —conveniences	...	...	...	...	10
Refuse, tips, etc.	...	...	...	...	13
Nuisances—animals	...	...	...	...	3
—smoke	...	...	...	...	13
—insects	...	...	...	...	17
—rats and mice	...	...	...	...	15
—other	...	...	...	...	10
Infectious diseases	...	...	...	...	25
Old Peoples Welfare	...	...	...	...	9
Caravans	...	...	...	...	28
Water Supplies—public	...	...	...	...	68
—private	...	...	...	...	98
Factories	...	...	...	...	14
Petroleum Regulations	...	...	...	...	32
Farm Welfare Acts	...	...	...	...	12
Schools	...	...	...	...	4
Swimming Pools	...	...	...	...	17
Food Inspections—					
Slaughterhouse	...	...	...	...	250
Butchers	...	...	...	...	32
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	1
Grocers, etc.	...	...	...	...	9
Public Houses	...	...	...	...	32
Cafes, Hotels	...	...	...	...	28
Milk	...	...	...	...	5
Miscellaneous visits	...	...	...	...	32
					1,270
Samples—Water	...	...	...	...	56
No. of complaints received	...	...	...	...	60
„ „ „ in which no action was taken	...	...	...	...	2
„ „ „ remedied by informal action	...	...	...	...	57
Statutory action was taken in respect of two houses and one factory. The notice on one house had not been complied with at the end of the year.					
Housing					
Action was taken as follows:					
No. of houses closed	...	...	..	.	11

No. of houses abandoned	...	...	...	...	...	2
" " " once closed but now repaired	...	...	...	...	...	1
" " " made fit after informal action	...	...	...	...	...	19
" " " " " " statutory action	...	...	...	...	...	1

In early 1959 the first results of the rural housing survey were published. Owing to modernisation under one or other of the Council's, or Ministry of Agriculture schemes, and the slum clearance programme this position is not static. After three years the position looks much better and the comparisons are as follows :—

Parish	Grades					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Abbeycwmhir						
1959	13	3	28	22	7	73
1961	22	2	26	21	2	73
Cefnlllys Rural						
1959	4	1	8	7	7	27
1961	8	—	7	9	3	27
Llanbadarnfawr						
1959	58	2	51	25	20	156
1961	62	3	47	34	8	154
Llanfihangel Helygen						
1959	2	—	8	4	1	15
1961	2	—	8	4	—	14
Llans'ffraed Cwmdeuddwr						
1959	86	1	46	27	21	181
1961	96	1	37	30	8	172
Llanyre						
1959	77	4	85	44	8	218
1961	88	5	79	45	—	217
Nantmel						
1959	43	10	86	51	30	220
1961	55	6	85	54	9	209
Rhayader						
1959	189	10	68	40	35	342
1961	216	5	71	27	27	346
St. Harmon						
1959	27	1	71	36	8	143
1961	40	3	61	38	5	147
Totals						
1959	499	32	451	256	137	1,375
1961	589	25	421	262	62	1,359
Percentages						
1959	36%	2%	33%	19%	10%	
1961	43%	2%	31%	19%	5%	

There are still 62 unfit houses left out of a total of 137 in 1959, 27 of these are in the town of Rhayader, the rest being more or less in outlying parts of the district. The latter presents less of a problem, for there is generally a smaller demand for poor houses in remote parts. As they become vacant it is the Council's policy to apply closing orders, and the properties are often used for some other purpose, mainly agriculture.

In Rhayader, however, derelict houses could quickly become an eyesore and a nuisance, and clearance orders made concurrently with the new housing scheme would seem to be the answer. To date there has been a demand for these houses in Rhayader, mainly from elderly people who may resist new accommodation on the score of high rents. The Council's scheme for grouped bungalows and the projected old peoples home would remove these objections and we can look forward to the end of this particular slum problem. Furthermore a recent survey by the Parish Council showed that there was a demand from old people for accommodation in an old peoples home.

When these unfit houses are removed however, the problem will still not be resolved, for there are two factors at work to continually alter the position. The first is the ever raising of standards, the second being the decay of poor houses, especially those with low rentals. Undoubtedly some of the Cat. 4. houses will be upgraded but the rest must eventually end up by being the new slum problem.

Since the original report, 7% of the total houses have been upgraded to Cat. 1. These were nearly all originally in Cat. 3 and have been improved by one or the other of the available grants.

The Hill Farming and Livestock Rearing Acts have been one of the big factors in the improvements of cottages. Under these schemes, 8 new houses have been built and another 3 are proposed, nearly 50 have been fully modernised, 29 have been partly improved and there are very many more to be improved in the next few years.

Discretionary grants have been given, by the Council, in over 50 cases for complete re-conditioning.

At the turn of the year about 26 houses had been improved with the aid of Standard Grants, and there seems to be sustained interest in the scheme. However, rural areas are badly handicapped in as much as the added cost of a septic tank, which can amount to about £100 is still not grant aided. The official answer to this seems to be that where a septic tank is necessary the larger discretionary grant should be applied. This would, in most cases, owing to the higher standard needed, involve raising ceilings, making new windows, etc., and would grossly inflate the cost of the improvements.

It is obviously unfair that of identical schemes in the town and country, the latter should be burdened with the entire cost of a septic tank, and it is no argument to say that the cost of this could be added to the admissible costs for these schemes are invariably costing more than the £310 envisaged by the Ministry.

These facts could perhaps be one reason why greater advantage is not taken of what is otherwise an excellent scheme.

Meat Inspection

	Cattle not Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
No. killed	20	5	1	437	52
No. inspected	20	5	1	437	52

Condemnations

All diseases except T.B.
and Cysticerci

Whole carcasses	—	—	—	8	—
Part carcasses	12	5	1	73	8
% affected	60%	100%	100%	18%	15%

T.B. only

Whole carcass	—	—	—	—	—
Part carcasses	—	—	—	—	3
% affected	—	—	—	—	5%

There were no cases of cysticercosis

The slaughterhouse is under the control of the Council who hold it under lease from the owner. It will revert to private ownership and use as from March, 1962.

This is the fourth consecutive year without Tuberculosis in cattle. It was found in three pigs and one gland was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, for examination. This was found to be avian T.B.—probably from domestic poultry and was not viable.

The other causes of condemnation were mainly offal with parasitic conditions, although there were some cases of actinobacillosis in cattle and one cancer. One large calf was deformed and it is difficult to see why this animal was ever allowed to live so long, so severe were the deformities.

Total weight was approximately 655lbs.

The removal of offal continues to be a grave problem in summer. This is not so difficult in winter when it is given to the

local hunt for boiling. Condemned carcasses, however, are an even worse problem and at present have to be stained and taken to the abattoir at Builth Wells.

Other Foods

The numbers and types of food premises in the district are:—

Grocers	...	...	...	...	39
Butchers	...	.	...	...	5
Public Houses	...	...	...	...	22
Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	4
Hotels	...	...	...	...	20
Cafes, restaurants		...	...	...	6
School canteens	...	...	...	...	11
					— —
Total					107

No lectures were given on food hygiene, but literature and posters were distributed to food traders for display.

A major problem occurred in the summer months when a large camp opened for boys. Owing to lack of preparation, staff, and experience, a great deal of time was spent advising and helping in the many problems that arose.

A number of parents complained of conditions in the camp but as these were outside the control of the Council there was little which could be done officially.

A venture of this kind, successfully carried out, could be a great asset to the district and it seems a pity that there will be no repeat in the coming year.

Destruction of Rats and Mice

The rodent operator is shared with Knighton Rural District Council. He works a total of 18 weeks annually in each district, on the basis of one week in two in Winter, and one week in four in Summer.

Occasionally there is difficulty in arranging a prompt visit, especially in Summer. However, on the whole the system works satisfactorily.

A number of odd cases of infestations were dealt with successfully. These included bees, mining bees, wasps' nests in difficult positions and two cases of bats in churches. One of the latter infestations yielded to treatment with a proprietary brand of moth repellent !

The record of treatment etc. is as follows. It will be seen from this the bulk of the work is needed on farms:—

	Type of Property				
	Council Premises	Dwelling Houses	Business	Farms	Total
Number in District	19	825	242	421	1,507
No. inspected	9	54	34	229	317
No. infested with rats or mice	5	13	15	38	71
Total treatments during year	12	30	33	83	158

Water Supplies

All water undertakings are owned by the Council and are under the control of the Surveyor and Water Engineer.

There are eleven separate works, seven of which are treated with chlorine before distribution. All the supplies are plumbo solvent but little or no lead pipes are used, nearly all services being in copper and recently in alkathene.

The results of the 138 bacteriological samples taken during the year are as follows:—

SUPPLY	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Remarks
Abbeycwmhir	1	7	Partially treated, inadequate
Bwlchysarnau	5	2	Untreated
Crossgates, Fron, Gwystre, etc.	9	—	Birmingham supply
Gaufron	1	5	Untreated
Llanyre (source)	—	4	Untreated
(mains)	5	2	Treated.
Nantmel	5	7	Partially treated, inadequate
Newbridge-on-Wye	7	2	" " "
Pantydwr (source)	—	6	Fully treated Untreated.
(main)	7	1	Fully Treated.
Rhayader			
(Conyn source)	—	9	Before treatment
(Nantsarn source)	—	3	" "
(Mains)	13	1	After treatment
St. Heliers	3	3	Llandrindod U.D.C. supply
	56	52	

The Council are by no means satisfied with their water supplies and distribution, and plans are suggested for a new supply for Newbridge and Llanyre, Gaufron and Nantmel with extensions at Crossgates and improvements for Rhayader.

As there have been no major changes in distribution during the year, the number of houses supplied will be affected by private improvements and the approximate figures are as below :—

Parish	No. of Houses	Public Mains		Private Sources	
		Piped	St'dpipes	Piped	★ Carried
Abbeycwmhir	73	20	—	33	20
Cefnlllys Rural	27	—	—	14	13
Llanbadarnfawr	154	101	4	24	25
Llanfihangel Helygen	14	8	—	2	4
Llansantffraed					
Cwmdeuddwr	172	93	8	42	29
Llanyre	217	160	4	32	21
Nantmel	209	67	3	64	78
Rhayader	346	311	35	—	—
St. Harmon	147	50	1	52	44
Total	1,359	810	55	263	234
Percentages		60%	4%	19%	17%

★ Includes hand pumped supplies

Refuse Collection

Collection is made as follows :—

Rhayader, Cwmdeuddwr and Elan Valley - twice weekly
Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates, Penybont and Nantmel—weekly

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantmel, Bwlchysarnau, Abbeycwmhir, Llangurig Road & Tylwch - fortnightly

Public Cemetery

Of the 54 deaths in the year, 3 were buried in the Council's public cemetery.

Public Conveniences

The Council have public conveniences at Rhayader, Cwmdeuddwr and the Cemetery, whilst the Birmingham Corporation have three conveniences in the area of the lakes.

Sewerage

There are modern plants at Rhayader, Crossgates and two

at Newbridge. It is hoped that within the near future plants will be provided at Pantydwr and Llanyre. In addition the Council have small plants for their houses at Dolau, Seven Stars and Brynicholas.

Two private plants serve a hotel and two groups of houses in the Elan Valley.

It is estimated that 191 houses are drained into septic tanks. The most recent of these are of a standard design suggested by the Council. These appear to be quite satisfactory.

Public Swimming Pools

The swimming pool for infants was in use during the year. The improvised chlorination plant seemed to be successful and with more experience should prove entirely satisfactory.

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written Notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	2	2	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	19	12	—	—
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises)	—	—	—	—
Total	21	14	—	—

Particulars	Number in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector By H.M. Inspector		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	1	1	—	1	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	—	—	—	—	—
Total	1	1	—	1	—

